



What's wrong with Risborough Town?



MIKE WHITESMAN reports

THEY'RE playing a waiting game as Risborough.

But then, basement-bound after fruitless experiments with 99.9 per cent of everything at their disposal, they are left with no other choice.

Many feel that time and persistence will foster their own remedy, and so faithfully keep plugging away to earn a change of fortune.

Time, however, is fast turning into a double-agent. The club are over half-way through their future programme, while, with every pointless Saturday that passes, their ally gradually

transforms into an enemy.

Player-manager, Jim Truett, fully realises the extent of his present dilemma. During his reign, Town have known promotion glory, just as they have the pangs of last season's relegation.

Yet now, a formerly alien experience looms ahead — an ominous need to seek re-election.

Unaccustomed as they are to dealing with such a worrying

prospect, the facts remain, the Hellenic League's Division one table.

Suffice to say that the once-forcible Princes Risborough Town must reap full points from their three games in hand over fellow-wallowers, Aylesbury Town Corinthians and Hungerford, to keep the flag of hopes hoisted.

And it was but a fortnight ago that the Corinthians

A WAITING GAME FOR JIM TRUETT

claimed the third victory of their season at Windsor Playing Fields.

Morale among the Risborough playing staff seems to be admirably high. There have of course been the recent resignations of Geoff Geddes and Mick Rockell, but thankfully, dependency is being stifled to a major degree.

Naturally everyone has his own thoughts and suggestions, as an afternoon's investigation at Windsor Playing Fields on Saturday was soon to reveal.

In a steam-filled dressing room after yet another defeat I spoke to several first team members, including Truett himself.

A fortnight earlier, whilst driving home from a relatively unexciting session by Wantage, Jim had told me that he didn't mind what he'd find now. Everything else had failed.

This week he confirmed that he is fully aware of Town's failings, by feeling that a list long enough to fill a column.

"There's a big hole in the middle of the pitch and we lack a couple of good wing-half backs; we give away too many loose balls when in possession due to inaccuracy; etc., etc., etc."

But recognising and solving the problems are two very different tasks. And, with a succession of injuries plaguing the club, Truett must merely hope for a minor miracle.

His continuing step will be to try out a young, inexperienced reserve team reservoir, particularly where the attack is concerned.

Despite growing pressure from friends and colleagues, it is unlikely that he will venture into the front line himself. Jim was first to confess that the five minutes spent in attack late in Saturday's match had been enough.

Responsibility for the mid-field 'hole' must, to a large degree, fall on the laicky Paul McStay. But "I feel torn between attack and defence," he explained.

Paul, formerly with Marlow, had until recently done staunch work in the number six shirt. Certainly his influence was badly missed during a prolonged injury that put him on the touchline for a number of weeks last year.

An experiment using him as a link-man with number ten on his back is mis-firing however, and will continue to do so until he is allowed to commit himself one way or the other. "In the last ten minutes I felt back into defence and felt much better," he admitted soon after Saturday's final whistle had blown.

Nevertheless Paul typifies native opinion when he says: "A good win, or even any win,



PAUL McSTAY
"any win would boost morale"

would help morale. Luck is certainly not with us at the moment."

His diagnosis? "The forward line is too small. We need more height in the middle, which is why we fall down in front of goal."

The crazy and industrious wingman, Albert Crabtree complains that "we're just not getting the run of the play". John Rogers, once a regular in the League's top-flight, has been persuaded out of retirement this winter, and sees, as centre forward, three faults to be made good.

"We want a good, hard-shooting forward. On the whole I'm quite satisfied with the support we're receiving from behind, but we're a bit too eager when we see a chance."

Point number three endorsed a view previously put forward by Brian Peel, that a bit more effort is needed.

Just before substituting for Richard Brooks during the second half, the Yorkshire-born utility-player also put forward a desire to see more workmanship and less individualism, in the team.

But, full back Alan Vickers hit the nail's head as hard as anyone when he said: "We've made it tighter in the back-row, but in so doing we've sacrificed the forward line."

It all suggests a vicious circle which ensnares a side that if not the elite of Hellenic League football, is still potentially out of place holding up the entire competition.

Perhaps patience is the only key to relief. After all Risborough have been hit hard all season with an endless casualty list. For instance, this week Ian Morris is laid up by a leg wound, necessitating nine stitches, and Truett, Vickers and Peel all played in suspect fitness.

An unchanged eleven from one week to the next is the rare exception rather than the rule. Indeed next Saturday could see as many as two or three alterations again.

And that is the one kind of consistency, Princes Risborough Town could well do without.

EXTRA TIME

Now it must be Slough Town!

● IT was a sentimental day for ex-Wycombe Wanderers player Peter Royston on Saturday when he captained his Wokingham team to a splendid 1-0 victory over his former club-leagues in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup clash.

With Wycombe now out of the competition the way is really left wide open for Slough to take the trophy they narrowly missed last season.

Other results in the quarter-final matches saw Wolverton and B.R. pull off an away success over Didcot Town, while Maidenhead United disposed of Aylesbury 2-0.

Another three

● AMERSHAM manager, Jimmy Smith, who may yet decide to quit soccer because of an ankle injury, hammered a hat-trick in the revenge match with Waddesdon on Saturday.

And although he says he is only playing to keep up a reasonably experienced first team squad, he has hit five of the Magpies' twelve goals in successive games.

A 3-1 win must have been a major tonic for Amersham. Earlier in the season the Premier Division's basement club had collected a surprise win at Spratley's Meadow 2-0.

Reserves off

● GROUND conditions put paid to Chalfont St. Peter Reserves' League fixture at Leighton Town on Saturday.

But then, reports of the Bedfordshire club's pitch from last season suggest that no one need be surprised by the referees decision.

Dean off again

● HE'S off again. Yes, Robin Dean, Princes Risborough's much-travelled, much-missed defender leaves England again this week, hardly any time at all after his recent return.

Business commitments draw him away, this time back to Israel. Trips recorded to date include those to Moscow, Greece, Rotterdam, Ireland and an earlier one to Israel.

His departure heaps another problem on Town's manager Jim Truett, who, as can be seen from the article on this page, is struggling to put a team back along the victory trail.

Dean expects to be back, however, within two or three weeks. It certainly can't be soon enough for the club.

end for the Senior Cup holders

MAN STAYS: DEREGERS OUT

Wycombe pay high price for their lack of application

By PATRICK VERCOE

Wokingham T. 1, Wycombe W. 0

which visibly worried the home defence. Baker and Royston worked an opening for Samuels but Binfield showed quick anticipation by charging out of his goal to smother the chance.

At the other end centre-forward Kelman streaked through the Wanderers defence, hotly pursued by Lailey, but Maskell had moved off his line to narrow the angle intelligently and was able to parry Kelman's first shot before the ex-Slough Town player lofted the rebound wide.

Just a minute from the interval Wokingham scored a goal which was disallowed for offside. This was certainly a lucky break for Wanderers and a decision which greatly angered the crowd. From a Lowe free-kick the ball was only partially cleared to Goodenough, who shot through a ruck of players and into Maskell's right hand. The linesman amazingly raised his flag to signal offside although a Wycombe defender was standing on his own goal-line.

Gift equaliser

Wokingham 'keeper Binfield, who often gave the impression of not being too sure with his handling, nearly gave Wycombe a gift equaliser when he fumbled the ball outside the area and was forced to concede a free-kick as Faulkner harassed him.

As a thunderstorm broke over Wokingham's seat and compact ground sending the spectators rushing for shelter, Wycombe nearly put themselves on equal status. Samuels' vicious curling cross brought a spectacular diving header from Merrick, which was just off target.

In the 63rd minute justice was seen to be done bearing in mind Wokingham's cancelled goal. It was, however, a tragedy for Wanderers that such a simple raid should produce the deciding margin.

Brill hit a high and hopeful pass deep into the Wycombe territory far too strong for Eon Harper to reach. But, Rendle was unable to get up with his usual sense of purpose and the ball scudded off the side of his head. Harper, who had never

line. Wokingham were instructed to sit on their head and consolidate. Centre-forward Kelman came out of the forward line to help block the middle allowing less room for Baker to manipulate openings.

The game now became a battle of technique tactics. In the 72nd minute Wycombe made a tactical change by pulling off Faulkner, which to me was a slightly harsh decision as he was playing no worse than any other of his colleagues, allowing Bushy to display his skills.

TONY HORSEMAN is to stay at Loakes Park after all. The Horseman saga took a new twist on Saturday evening when coach Brian Lee informed me that the goal king would remain with Wycombe Wanderers.

It was understood Horseman would be appearing in Slough Town's reserves to meet Redhill at the Dolphin on Saturday. However, following Wanderers' shock Berks and Bucks Senior Cup defeat at Wokingham on Saturday, Brian Lee issued the following statement:

The resignation of Tony Horseman to Wycombe Wanderers has been cancelled. He has been suspended by the team coach for a week from January 31, for a breach of club rules. He is therefore eligible for selection as from February 8.

So Horseman's seven-year reign at Loakes Park continues. Obviously he would have been missed by the

TONY'S 7 DAY BAN

club, despite the general feeling of the fans for his materialise from the whole affair. New coach Brian Lee will obviously stand no nonsense from his players as is indicated by Horseman's one-week ban.

There is, however, one interesting aspect to the whole affair. New coach Brian Lee will obviously stand no nonsense from his players as is indicated by Horseman's one-week ban.

Patrick Vercoe

MARLOW FALTER AT HOME AND KISS HOPES GOODBYE

Marlow 0, Boreham Wood 1

IN A VERY DULL, drab game at Marlow on Saturday, the home team, which did not contain one single forward worthy of the name, lost both points, and in doing so virtually kissed goodbye to the promotion hopes with which Marlow so hopefully began the season.

One goal, a simple header in the 62nd minute, was enough to give the Boreham Wood side — one of the poorest to visit Marlow for many seasons — the points.

Before the start of this Athenian League, Division 2 game, there was just the slimmest of outside chances that Marlow might even at this late stage, struggle to second place in the table by the end of the season and attain higher status. But

By 'RANGER'

with this defeat that can now be quite definitely written off.

With such an obvious lack of forward striking power it is unlikely if this Marlow side can reasonably expect to go anywhere. The prospect of facing mighty Slough Town tomorrow does nothing to breed optimism, and all that one can look for is a desperate rearguard action.

Against Boreham Wood it was Marlow defence which emerged as the heroes. They put up a magnificent show to a man, with Dave Wigley in goal, Peter Stone at centre-half and Peter Eyres outstanding. Tony Austin and Matthew Watt fetched and carried the whole game long, but to no avail

forwards. They were disjointed and lacked cohesion as well as the necessary vital timing to split open a packed Boreham Wood defence.

The Hertfordshire side had a hunch about it all the way through which Marlow could not match and in this factor alone lay the major difference between the sides. It was nothing to see ten men back in defence of the "Wood" goal, yet with one long clearance, to see seven of them hounding the life out of the home defenders.

Having seen the attempts of the Marlow forward line for the past three successive matches, it is patently obvious that at least one goal-scorer has to be found. Failure to do so is only going to result in a total breakdown of the defensive curtain which has the best record in the league.

As individuals, Bobby Marchant and Ray Palmer continued to give 100 per cent effort, but they could not be expected to shoulder the burden alone. Mick Page was well below his usual standard and Bernie Saunders could get little to go right for him, while Dave Edwards, until he was injured, contributed little apart from a couple of excellent cross-field passes that split the Boreham Wood defence, but derived no other benefit.

The vital winning goal came after 62 minutes when Will France created a chance out of a hopeless looking situation. He set up Stan Painter in an open

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